

YWJ Teen Devo: You Have a Friend Request from Jesus
By Barry Shafer

The Word

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be My disciples. As the Father has loved Me, so have I loved you. Now remain in My love. If you obey My commands, you will remain in My love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in His love. I have told you this so that My joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in My name. This is My command: Love each other” (John 15:5-17).

The Backdrop:

Jesus described His disciples in many ways, some of which weren’t all that flattering: “Are you being willfully stupid?” (Matt. 15:16, *The Message*). However, one endearing description stands out; and Jesus reserved it for His final conversation with the disciples prior to His trial and crucifixion.

The What

Do This:

Print the passage above or read from your Bible John 15:5-17. As you read, circle anything that relates to intimacy or friendship with Jesus.

Now This:

Look at what you circled and jot down any words or phrases Jesus used to describe the relationship He had with His disciples.

The So What:

All the ways Jesus described His relationship with His disciples are also true of His relationship with you. Ponder that for a minute. In fact, use the micro-exercises below to help you internalize this truth.

Write a short psalm to Jesus about what it means to you that He has called you His friend.

Meditate on this statement for the next five minutes: Jesus has chosen you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will last.

The word *remain* is translated as “abide” and conveys the idea of a familiar relationship. Think of a friend you’d most like to travel with on a cross-country road trip. That’s partly what “remain” and “abide” express. That’s the kind of familiarity Jesus wants with us. Look again at John 15:5-17 and make a list of things that will happen if we remain in Jesus and a list of things that will happen if we don’t remain in Jesus.

Perhaps the most endearing description Jesus used for His disciples was *friend*, and it’s probably no coincidence that He saved it for this intimate farewell conversation (John 14—17) He had with them at a time when they were going to need all the help they could get to face the difficult days to come.

What about you? What are you facing? No matter what it is, you can lock your heart and mind around the truth that Jesus has chosen you and called you *friend*. If you’re looking for one more step to take, the words of a Facebook button ring true: Respond now: Confirm Friend.